

## LANDING A JOB IN A NORTH DAKOTA OIL TOWN



Workers can land jobs left and right, some paying six-figures, while working in one of North Dakota's oil boomtowns. However, there is a yen to every yang, and the abundance of jobs comes with a few dramatic trade-offs. While working in a boomtown, you will like not find housing and will find yourself facing an extremely harsh North Dakota winter. North Dakota has the lowest unemployment rate in the entire country. It hovers at 3.5% compared to the nationwide rate of 9.1%. Within North Dakota, towns like Belfield, Williston and Watford City experience an even lower rate of 1.5%, because of their proximity to the Bakken oil formation. With no requirement of a college degree or specific experience, oil companies are hiring workers to tend to the formation. These workers can expect to make around \$100,000 a year. Jobs vary, depending on your desires. Workers can find positions ranging from administrative work to working on the rig itself. Continental Resources, Halliburton, Whiting Petroleum, and Hess are a few of the largest competitors stationed in the area. While you will find many opportunities within the oil industry, it is not the only place hiring. The boom brought an incredibly large influx of people. This created an overwhelming demand in every industry from food to hospitality. While driving through the town of Williston, now populated with over 20,000 people, you will see one hiring sign after another. The median salary in this town is slightly above \$57,000, and you can find around 2,500 job openings at any time. Fast food chains hire employees at an average rate of \$15 per hour. Clothing stores, pharmacies, hospitals, bars, gas stations, banks, and hair salons compete with the oil fields for employees. Because of this, these establishments are willing to pay a pretty penny to keep employees away from its biggest competitor. Shawn Wenko, the workplace development coordinator in the city of Williston, puts it simply by saying, "If someone doesn't have a job here, they don't want to work." Nearby towns that also offer high pay rates include: New Town, Dickinson, Stanley, Tioga, and Minot. To find employment in any of these areas, North Dakota has an official job portal. Alternatively, checking popular classifieds like Craigslist.com or Indeed.com will yield job opportunities for the out-of-town job seeker. Most jobs will require intense hours of physical labor, especially from those working full time for the oil companies. People working in these oil towns find that work occupies all of their life. Many workers will work a full time job, get as many overtime hours as possible, and go sleep for about 4 hours before returning back to work. Benjamin Lukes, who makes \$100,000 a year working as a hydraulic fractured in Williston, says, "We work insane hours. Over this two week cycle, I've work 220 to 230 hours. We get more overtime than straight pay with all those hours, and that's where the tradeoff is."

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